

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 LONDON 00319 01 OF 02 062036Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 OMB-01
INT-05 DOE-11 SOE-02 /091 W
-----087803 062127Z /72-73

R 062010Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1812
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USNATO
AMCONSUL BELFAST
AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 00319

USEEC ALSO FOR EMBASSY

USOECD ALSO FOR EMBASSY

DEPARTMENT PASS LABOR

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, UK
SUBJECT: FIREMEN'S EXECUTIVE TO RECOMMEND SETTLEMENT:
TUC PRIVATELY WARNS GOVERNMENT ON INFLEXIBILITY

REF: LONDON REFTELS 20440 AND 20773
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 LONDON 00319 01 OF 02 062036Z

SUMMARY: FIREMEN'S UNION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, AFTER MARATHON NEGOTIATIONS WITH LOCAL AUTHORITY EMPLOYERS (BACKED BY GOVERNMENT) HAS AGREED TO RECALL DELEGATE CONFERENCE AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF ESSENTIALLY SAME PAY OFFER EXECUTIVE REJECTED A MONTH AGO. WHILE TUC LEADERS ARE HOPEFUL DELEGATE CONFERENCE (WHICH

REJECTED EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION NOT TO
STRIKE IN THE FIRST PLACE) WILL ACCEPT OFFER, THEY
REMAIN CAUTIOUS IN VIEW OF MAVERICK BEHAVIOR OF UNION
DURING STRIKE THAT BEGAN NOVEMBER 14. MEANWHILE, TUC

ORCHESTRATED CABINET LEVEL KITE-FLYING CAMPAIGN FOR A
FOURTH ROUND OF WAGE RESTRAINT IS PREMATURE AND MAY
RISK THE SUCCESS SO FAR OF THIS ROUND. END OF SUMMARY

1. FOLLOWING MARATHON TALKS OVER PAST 3 DAYS WITH LOCAL
AUTHORITY EMPLOYERS (AND HOME SECRETARY REES STANDING
BY), FIRE BRIGADES' UNION (FBU) EXECUTIVE BY 12-4
VOTE AGREED TO RECALL UNION DELEGATE CONFERENCE NEXT
WEEK AND RECOMMEND ACCEPTANCE OF ESSENTIALLY SAME
OFFER (WITH MINOR CONCESSIONS ON NON-PAY ITEMS) MADE BY
LOCAL AUTHORITIES LAST DECEMBER 9 I.E. AN IMMEDIATE
(BACKDATED 10 PER CENT PAY INCREASE, REDUCTION OF WORK
WEEK FROM 48 TO 42 HOURS (PROBABLY BY NOVEMBER),
SUBSTANTIAL PAY INCREMENTS IN 1978 AND 1979 TO BRING
FIREMEN'S PAY BY NOVEMBER 1979 INTO COMPARABILITY WITH
THE AVERAGE EARNINGS OF THE HIGHEST QUARTILE OF SKILLED
MANUAL WORKERS, AND NEGOTIATION OF A LONG-TERM PAY
FORMULA -- WHICH THE GOVERNMENT WOULD UNDERWRITE TO
SUSTAIN THE FIREMEN'S PAY LEAGUE POSITION "EVEN IN THE
EVENT OF UNFORESEEN ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES" (CALLAGHAN'S
WORDS). ALSO, IT IS LIKELY THAT VARIOUS LOCAL AUTHORITIES
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 LONDON 00319 01 OF 02 062036Z

TIES MAY GIVE FIREMEN SLIGHT PAY SWEETENERS BY PRIVATE
ARRANGEMENTS FOR OVERTIME TO COMPENSATE FOR "STAFF
SHORTAGES."

2. THE FBU EXECUTIVE WHOSE ORIGINAL RECOMMENDATION
AGAINST STRIKING HAD BEEN REJECTED BY A DELEGATE
CONFERENCE WHICH LED TO THE FIRST NATIONAL FIREMEN'S
STRIKE IN BRITAIN'S HISTORY, HAS BEEN RELUCTANT TO RECALL
A DELEGATE CONFERENCE. IT WILL HAVE TASK OF PURSUADING A
BITTER AND FRUSTRATED RANK AND FILE WHY AN OFFER
AVAILABLE MONTH AGO SHOULD BE ACCEPTED NOW. TRADE
UNION SOURCES CLOSE TO THE DISPUTE WHILE HOPEFUL ARE
CAUTIOUS ABOUT PREDICTING ACCEPTANCE OF THE OFFER
SINCE THE FIREMEN'S BEHAVIOR AND MOOD HAVE NOT FOLLOWED
USUAL TRADE UNION PATTERNS. NEVERTHELESS THERE HAS
BEEN GROWING RANK AND FILE PRESSURE TO SETTLE ESPECIALLY
IN RURAL AREAS WHERE FIREMEN HAVE BEEN DRIFTING BACK
TO WORK AND AS WELL AS SOME OPEN DEMANDS TO END STRIKE.
THERE IS APPARENTLY GROWING RECOGNITION THERE IS MORE TO
LOSE THAN WIN BY CONTINUING THE WALKOUT IN THE FACE OF
REPEATED REBUFFS FROM TUC FOR SUPPORT, THE FAILURE TO
GET MORE THAN TOKEN SUPPORT (BEYOND SOME MINOR FINANCIAL

CONTRIBUTIONS) EVEN FROM SYMPATHETIC UNIONISTS, THE
SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN PUBLIC SYMPATHY FROM FIREMEN TO
THE MILITARY WHICH ARE DOING FIREFIGHTING FOR FAR LESS
PAY, AND THE SURFACING OF NASTY INCIDENTS SETTING THE
FIREMEN AGAINST NONSTRIKERS, AND A PUBLIC FED UP WITH
PROPERTY LOSSES (EVEN THOUGH NONE OF LIVES LOST IN FIRES

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 LONDON 00319 02 OF 02 062038Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 OMB-01
INT-05 DOE-11 SOE-02 /091 W
-----087806 062129Z /72-73

R 062010Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1813
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USNATO
AMCONSUL BELFAST
AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 00319

HAVE BEEN ATTRIBUTED TO STRIKE)& THE GOV'T IS NOT MOVING

3. PRIVATELY, TUC LEADERS HAVE BEEN PRESSING FIRE
BRIGADES' SECRETARY, TERRY PARRY (A GENERAL COUNCIL
MEMBER) TO SETTLE AND OTHER UNION OFFICIALS INFORMALLY
HAVE BEEN VISITING PICKETS URGING "REALISM..ON THEM. IN
CONVERSATION, KEY GENERAL COUNCIL MEMBERS ARE SHARPLY

CRITICAL OF PARRY AND FBU EXECUTIVE FOR A FAILURE OF LEADERSHIP, I.E. NOT PREPARING THE MEMBERSHIP PSYCHOLOGICALLY FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF INDUSTRIAL ACTION, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 LONDON 00319 02 OF 02 062038Z

AND IN PROCESS LOSING CONTROL OF THE UNION, AND RISKING ITS DISINTEGRATION.

4. TUC SOURCES NOTE PARRY, IF SKILLFUL, CAN MAKE CASE WITH MEMBERS THAT THE STRIKE DID WIN THE UNPRECEDENTED CONCESSION OF A GUARANTEE OF ITS POSITION IN PAY LEAGUE. BUT NOTE THAT NOW OTHER UNIONS MAY SEEK SIMILAR CONCESSION IN UPCOMING NEGOTIATIONS -- PARTICULARLY AMONG PROFESSIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES. THEY SAY SETTLEMENT OF 1.15 MILLION LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANUAL WORKERS WITHIN 10 PER CENT PAY GUIDELINE IS A KEY PATTERN SETTING AGREEMENT FOR MANY OTHER PUBLIC EMPLOYEES BUT THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT OUT OF THE WOODS YET ON THIS PAY ROUND. THEY SEE POSSIBLE DANGEROUS CLASHES IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH E.G. SKILLED POWER ENGINEERS, NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE EMPLOYEES WHO ARE DEMANDING IN MILITANT TERMS "SUBSTANTIAL" PAY RISES.

5. CONSEQUENTLY THE TUC HAS PRIVATELY TOLD THE GOVERNMENT THAT ITS ORCHESTRATED KITE-FLYING AT THIS TIME FOR A FOURTH ROUND OF PAY MODERATION POLICY (AT LOWER THAN 10 PER CENT) BY CALLAGHAN, HEALEY AND LESSER CABINET MINISTERS IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS, AND THEIR PUBLIC DEPREICATION OF "FREE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING" AS A MEANS OF SETTLING WAGE CLAIMS IS PREMATURE. TUC LEADERS HAVE PRIVATELY TOLD THE GOVERNMENT, IT IS PUSHING ITS LUCK, AND IS POSSIBLY ENDANGERING THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE PRESENT ROUND. THE STRONGEST GENERAL COUNCIL SUPPORTERS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PAY POLICY SAY THEY WERE SURPRISED THAT THE FIREMEN RECEIVED SUCH A LARGE MINORITY (17) VOTE WHEN THE GENERAL COUNCIL REBUFFED THE FBU BID FOR SUPPORT (LONDON 20773). WHILE THERE IS NO QUESTION OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 LONDON 00319 02 OF 02 062038Z

SUPPORT BY THE TUC FOR PAY MODERATION GENERAL COUNCIL SOURCES SAY THEY HAVE TOLD THE GOVERNMENT THE VOTE WAS LESS A MATTER OF SUPPORTING THE FIREMEN (WHO MIGHT ORDINARILY HAVE COUNTED ON 4 OR 5 VOTES) THAN A WIDER PROTEST AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT'S INSUFFICIENT FLEXIBILITY IN ENFORCING ITS PAY GUIDELINES, AND INADEQUATE RECOG-

NITION OF FREE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AS A BASIC TRADE
UNION PRINCIPLE AND DEVICE FOR WAGE SETTING.

BREWSTER

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR UNIONS, STRIKE SETTLEMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LONDON00319
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780011-0135
Format: TEL
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780192/aaaaczv.tel
Line Count: 228
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d79601e6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 LONDON 20440
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3818700
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FIREMEN'S EXECUTIVE TO RECOMMEND SETTLEMENT: TUC PRIVATELY WARNS GOVERNMENT ON INFLEXIBILITY
TAGS: ELAB, UK
To: STATE USEEC MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d79601e6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014